DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 306 507 CG 021 640

AUTHOR Williams, Betsy L.; Hartlage, Lawrence C.
TITLE Communication and Retention of Psychoeducational Diagnostic Information in Parent Conferences.
PUB DATE Aug 88
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association (96th, Atlanta, GA, August 12-16, 1988).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Diagnosis; Elementary Secondary Education; *Interpersonal Communication; *Parent Conferences; *Psychoeducational Methods; *School Psychologists; *Test Interpretation

ABSTRACT

Although most diagnostic features of psychoeducational assessment have received considerable attention from researchers in school psychology, the application of the scientific information developed by this assessment has received comparatively little study. This project studied 20 parents of children who had received psychoeducational diagnostic evaluations. Conferences with parents were tape recorded and independent listener-raters evaluated the extent to which given information categories had been communicated. Parents completed similar evaluation forms both after the conference and as follow-up to assess retention. Both information comprehended and information recalled by parents were low, although raters and examiner-communicator ratings were in agreement that the information had been communicated. Aspects of information which were least comprehended and retained point out which foci of communication may need more elaboration, augmentation, illustration, or explanation. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED306507

Communication and Retention of Psychoeducational Diagnostic Information in Parent Conferences

Betsy L. Williams

Lawrence C. Hartlage

CG 021640

Running head: Communication and Retention of Psychodiagnostic Information

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Betsy L. Williams

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT

Communication and Retention

of Psychoeducational Diagnostic Information

in Parent Conferences

Although most diagnostic features of psychoeducational assessment have received considerable attention from researchers in school psychology, the application of the scientific information developed by this assessment has received comparatively little study.

This project studied 20 parents of children who had received psychoeducational diagnostic evaluations. Conferences with parents were tape recorded and independent listener-raters evaluated the extent to which given information categories had been communicated. Parents completed similar evaluation forms both after the conference and as follow-up to assess retention.

Both information comprehended and information recalled by parents was low, although raters and examiner-communicator ratings were in agreement that the information had been communicated. Aspects of information which were least comprehended and retained point out which foci of communication may need more elaboration, augmentation, illustration or explanation.

COMMUNICATION AND RETENTION OF PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSTIC INFORMATION IN PARENT CONFERENCES

The role of the school psychology practitioner in applying science is manifest daily in the communication of psychological examination results to parents and others. Although most aspects of the psychological examination, such as test development, administration, validation, standardization and interpretation have been the topic of extensive research, the communication of findings from test data has been relatively ignored by researchers. Such research on the topic as has been reported has tended to focus on the written report rather than on the sort of verbal communication involved in parent conferences (eg. Hartlage, Freeman, Horine & Walton, 1968). At least one such study has shown that consideration of how the test data are reported results in improved ratings of the utility of psychological reports, as judged by users of such reports (Hartlage & Merck, 1971). Studies in parent conferences, such as those involving the communication of information concerning the existence of Down's Syndrome (trisomy 21) to parents, vs. the communication of factual information about recurrence risks to adults found to have sickle cell trait (HbAs), have suggested that conferences involving the communication of confirmatory negative information may evoke parental responses which interfere with comprehension of information to an extent greater than that resultant from the comments of factual information concerning recurrence risks (eg. Antley, Antley & Hartlage, 1976; Hartlage & Antley, 1976).

Thus it appears that study of the communication of psychological test data to parents, in the format of the traditional parent conference, offers promise as a focus of research in the application of science; with special relevance to both increasing understanding of the process

involved and in possibly enhancing the utilization of the information conveyed. This study evaluated parental comprehension and retention of information communicated to them in a conference following psychoeducational evaluation of their child.

METHOD

Twenty parents of children who had received fairly extensive psychoeducational evaluation were studied. Each parent was seen individually by the examiner, and recordings of all sessions were made. Demographic descriptors on parents provided support for their ability to comprehend the data. The examiner's comments were rated by independent listeners as to the information communicated on various topics. Parents receiving the information also rated the information communicated. After approximately two weeks, followup survey of parents was done to determine whether their retention of information had increased or decreased over this period of time.

RESULTS

In general, the information which was rated by both the communicating examiner and independent listeners showed good agreement; i.e., the raters agreed with the examiner/communicator that the information had been communicated. Parental rating was considerably lower across most categories of items rated, suggesting that they either did not recognize the information had been communicated, or did not remember it. On followup, recollection by parents was slightly lower than on initial report at time of conference.

Percentages of recognition of given types of information retained over both immediate and near term ratings by parents showed some pattern variability.

DISCUSSION

The sorts of items recognized and retained by parents following diagnostic evaluation of their child suggest patterns concerning what sorts of information is comparatively more (or less) likely to be retained. This, in turn, can serve as a preliminary guideline for suggesting what types of information may profit from augmentation, whether by graphic aid, example, or elaboration. Hopefully, findings will encourage further work in the evaluation and elucidation of factors underlying parental comprehension of diagnostic information presented by school psychologists in parent conferences.

References

Antley, M.A., Antley, R.M., and Hartlage, L.C. (1973). Effects of genetic counseling on parental self-concept. The Journal of Psychology, 83, 335-338.

Hartlage, L.C. and Antley, R.M. (1976). Psychological responses to genetic counseling for Down's syndrome. Clinical Genetics, 9 (3), 257-266.

Hartlage, L.C., Freeman, W., Horine, L., and Walton, C. (1968). Decisional utility of psychological reports. Journal of Psychology, 14, (41), 481-483.

Hartlage, L.C. and Merck, K.H. (1971). Increasing the relevance of psychological reports. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 27, (4), 459-460.